

# The Energy Information Administration's Web Editorial Style Guide

This style guide will help you produce uniform documents, regardless of Office or Division. It will also save you time. Ever wondered or worried about which was correct:

- Federal Government or federal government?
- Which or that?
- Active or passive voice (and what is passive voice)?

You can quickly find answers to these questions — and most of your style-related questions — in this guide.

- Do these guidelines apply to print publications?

The purpose of this guide is to provide style consistency in web content. It addresses style issues that are particular to web writing, as well as effective content and most of the advice applies to all the writing that you do.

This is a style guide — not a rule book — and we encourage your Office or Division to adapt. Unlike grammar that has specific rules that cannot be broken, many style issues are preferences, such as how and when to write out numbers. Writers and editors may differ. Our goal is to provide guidance on style issues so that the content on our website has uniformity that sources professionals.

Style consistency enhances readability. Inconsistent word usage will cause readers to question the information presented. Using a uniform style throughout our website will ensure that we have high-quality standards for our content. The most common style issues that we address are: capitalization, punctuation, abbreviations, and the use of numbers. For more information on the rules for using commas, consult these online references:

- [The Chicago Manual of Style](#), the most widely used style manual. EIA has a subscription to the Chicago Manual of Style. Just click on any link to the Chicago Manual of Style within this Style Guide, and you will be taken directly to the Chicago Manual of Style website.
- [GPO Style Manual](#), a good source of information about issues that are specific to writing for the Federal Government
- [Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary](#), EIA's "official" dictionary

EIA's [Colleen Blessing](#) is the editor-in-chief of the Style Guide. Please [contact Colleen](#) with any questions or comments you may have about its contents.

## 2. Writing well at EIA

### • Use short sentences.

Shorter sentences are easier to read, so try to write sentences of 20 to 30 words rather than much longer ones. If you've written a very long sentence, consider breaking it into two.

*Example of a paragraph with short, easy-to-read sentences:* This is an advance summary of EIA's report on domestic proved reserves of crude oil and natural gas. (11 words) It presents key data tables and some highlights of petroleum industry activity that impacted oil and natural gas production and proved reserves in 2006. (24 words) more comprehensive data. (14 words)

### • Use short paragraphs.

Avoid long paragraphs or large blocks of text. Long paragraphs are daunting and difficult for readers to scan. Try to write paragraphs of four or five sentences as one paragraph are fine.

### • Avoid jargon.

Jargon is fine when you're writing exclusively for experts. But most web content is accessible to a wide range of readers, from experts on your topic to novices. As much as possible, choose non-technical terms so all your intended readers can understand what you've written. If you must use jargon or technical language, be sure to explain the term in simple language. To make the concept clear to the layperson, you may want to provide an

**DRAFT**  
**April 9, 2009**

# Web Editorial Style Guide

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# Web Editorial Guidelines — Introduction

## Introduction

### 1. Using the EIA Web Editorial Style Guide

- Why a web editorial style guide?

We wrote this style guide to help EIA writers produce consistent, correct, and readable web content. It provides guidance on those style issues — including capitalization, punctuation, word usage, tone — most relevant to EIA writing.

This style guide will help you produce uniform documents, regardless of Office or Division. It will also save you time. Ever wondered or worried about which was correct:

- Federal Government or federal government?
- Which or that?
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You can quickly find answers to these questions — and most of your style-related questions — in this guide.

- Do these guidelines apply to print publications?

The purpose of this guide is to provide style consistency in web content. It addresses some issues that are particular to web writing, such as writing effective hypertext links. But most of the advice applies to all the writing that you do — print reports, content for the website, and even PowerPoint presentations.

- Are these hard-and-fast rules?

This is a style guide — not a rule book — that we encourage your Office or Division to adopt. Unlike grammar that has specific rules that cannot be broken, many style issues are preferences, such as how and when to write out numbers. Writers and editors may differ. Our goal is to provide guidance on style issues so that the content on our website has uniformity that conveys professionalism.

Style consistency enhances our credibility. Inconsistencies in style or misused words will cause users to question the accuracy of our data. Using a uniform style throughout our website tells users that EIA has high quality standards for our content and our data.

- Where can I get more guidance on editorial style?

We've addressed the most common style issues that EIA writers face. This is not meant to be a comprehensive style guide. If you have a question that isn't covered in this guide, or if there is a topic you'd like to know more about (all the rules for using commas!), consult these online references:

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## 2. Writing well at EIA

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Shorter sentences are easier to read, so try to write sentences of 20 to 30 words rather than much longer ones. If you've written a very long sentence, consider breaking it into two.  
  
*Example of a paragraph with short, easy-to-read sentences:* This is an advance summary of EIA's report on domestic proved reserves of crude oil, natural gas, and natural gas liquids. [21 words] It presents key data tables and some highlights of petroleum industry activity that impacted oil and natural gas production and proved reserves in 2006. [24 words] The full report (to be published in November 2007) will contain more comprehensive data. [14 words]
- **Use short paragraphs.**  
Avoid long paragraphs or large blocks of text. Long paragraphs are daunting and difficult for readers to scan. Try to write paragraphs of four or five sentences or approximately 100-125 words. Even paragraphs as short as one sentence are fine.
- **Avoid jargon.**  
Jargon is fine when you're writing exclusively for experts. But most web content is accessible to a wide range of readers, from experts on your topic to novices. As much as possible, choose non-technical terms so all your intended readers can understand what you've written. If you must use jargon or technical language, be sure to explain the term in simple language. To make the concept clear to the layperson, you may want to provide an example or an analogy.
- **Be consistent.**  
Good writing is built on patterns, so be consistent within your content.
  - Use consistent terminology. Don't call it *gasoline* in some instances and *motor gasoline* in others.
  - Use abbreviations consistently. For example, if you use *M* as the abbreviation for *thousand*, don't use any other abbreviation for that number.

- **Consider your audience.**

The best writers anticipate, and answer, their readers' questions. Identify your intended readers before you begin writing. Think about what they already know and what they will want to know about your topic. While planning and drafting your content, consider their level of technical expertise, their depth of interest, and the tasks they will be performing with the information you provide.

## Web Editorial Guidelines — Chapter 1 — Editorial Voice and Formatting

### Chapter 1: Editorial Voice and Formatting

Your writing speaks to your readers; it has a voice. At EIA, we want our writing voice to be professional, clear, and concise. This section covers some of the ways to create EIA's voice.

#### 1. Using an inverted pyramid format to structure your writing

- Put your main message first so your readers can quickly get the most important information and then decide if they want to read more.
- Organize your content so that the information appears in order of importance, from highest level to supporting details.

Why did gasoline prices increase in 2005?

Gasoline prices greatly increased in 2005 because of escalating global demand for oil and severe disruptions to oil production caused by Hurricane Katrina. Because of these factors, gasoline prices rose from \$1.78 per gallon on January 3 to \$3.07 per gallon on September 5.

In 2004 and 2005, increased global demand for oil stretched capacity along the entire oil market system and caused a surge in crude oil prices. In addition, Hurricane Katrina had a devastating impact on U.S. gasoline markets, initially taking out more than 25 percent of U.S. crude oil production and 10-15 percent of U.S. refinery capacity.

#### 2. Choosing active or passive voice

- In active voice sentences, the subject is doing the action of the verb.
- In passive voice sentences, the object is doing the action of the verb.

*Active voice:* We decided to rerun the NEMS model.

*Passive voice:* It was decided by EIA to rerun the NEMS model.

- Use active voice most of the time.
  - Use the active voice so readers can scan and comprehend information quickly.
  - Use active voice to write concisely, because active voice sentences are normally shorter than passive voice sentences.

*Active voice:* The Clean Air Amendments of 1990 set the course for reducing pollution. (12 words)

*Passive voice:* The course for reducing pollution was set by the Clear Air Amendments of 1990. (14 words)

- Use the passive voice sparingly. The passive voice can be used occasionally for these purposes:
  - To emphasize the object of the action, not the doer.

Stringent emissions guidelines were issued by the California Air Resources Board in 1990.

- When the subject of the sentence (the doer) is unimportant or unknown. In passive voice sentences the doer may be left out.

Stringent emissions guidelines were issued in 1990.

- To structure the heading, blurb, or lead sentence to place key words at the beginning. Source: Jakob Nielsen, [\*Passive Voice is Redeemed for Web Headings\*](#)

New Conservation Guidelines Are Adopted by Legislature

The writer chose to use the passive voice to feature the words "New Conservation Guidelines." If the writer had chosen the active voice "Legislature Adopts New Conservation Guidelines," the emphasis would be on "Legislature" not the "New Conservation Guidelines."

### 3. Using simple words and phrases

- Use simple and specific words — not bureaucratic or clichéd expressions — to give your writing clarity and a welcoming tone.

#### **Bureaucratic or clichéd**

along these lines  
at the present time;  
at this point in time  
by means of  
due to the fact that  
during the course of  
equally as  
for the most part  
in order to  
in spite of the fact that  
in the event that  
in the vicinity of  
in violation of  
including, but not limited to  
it is felt that  
kind of  
not strong  
not well suited  
on or before December 2  
on the basis of  
on the part of  
presents a summary of  
prior to  
the reason why is that  
the table is a list of  
used for fuel purposes  
utilize  
whether or not  
with regard to

#### **Simple and specific**

(omit)  
now  
now  
with, in, by  
because  
during  
equally  
mostly  
to  
although  
if  
near  
violates  
including  
(omit)  
rather  
weak  
unfit, poorly suited  
by December 2  
based on  
by  
summarizes  
before  
because  
the table shows  
used for fuel  
use  
whether  
about

#### 4. Using parallel structure

- Use the same grammatical structure to present two or more ideas of equal value in a sentence.

***Parallel structure:***

The project director is a strong leader, a skillful politician, and an effective manager.

*Each item in the series uses the same structure: adjective plus noun.*

***Not parallel structure:***

The project director is a strong leader, a skillful politician, and he manages effectively.

*The third item (he manages effectively) uses a different word structure: subject, verb, adverb instead of adjective and noun.*

- Present the same type of information in a similar format to make the information easier to read.

Relevant definitions include:

- Deepwater — a water depth that is greater than 200 but less than 1,500 meters
  - Ultra-deepwater — a water depth that is equal to or greater than 1,500 meters
- Use parallel structure for items in a numbered or bulleted list.
- For more information on using parallel structure in numbered or bulleted lists, see:
  - [Chapter 10, Section 3](#)

## 5. Maintaining consistent verb tenses

- Maintain consistent verb tenses to clearly establish the time frame of the action.

### **Consistent verb tense:**

Natural gas is created by the underground decomposition of organic matter. Much of the carbon and hydrogen is converted to methane, the major component of natural gas.

Using the present tense consistently conveys that the action (both the decomposition of organic matter and the conversion to methane) is happening in the same time frame and is an ongoing process.

### **Inconsistent verb tense:**

Natural gas was created by the underground decomposition of organic matter. Much of the carbon and hydrogen is converted to methane, the major component of natural gas.

The shift in verb tense from past (was created) to present (is converted) is confusing to the reader. It implies that the decomposition of organic matter happened in the past, but that the conversion to methane is occurring only now (present tense).

- Do not change verb tenses unless you want to indicate a clear shift in time.

*Appropriate shift in verb tense:* The regulations were adopted in 2000. The regulations will be reviewed in 2010.

*The first sentence uses the past tense (were adopted) to indicate action that happened in the past. The second sentence uses the future tense (will be reviewed) to indicate future action.*

## 6. Tailoring the formality of your writing to the audience

How formal should your writing be? At EIA, we favor formal language over informal language. But the formality of your writing depends upon what you are writing and whom you are writing for.

For example, if you are writing a report for Congress, your language would be formal. But if you are writing an Energy In Brief, a web product primarily for the general public, your language would be more informal.

What makes writing formal or informal?

- Using a noun rather than a pronoun makes your writing more formal.

Formal language: EIA cannot develop an independent estimate of revenue impact.

Informal language: We cannot develop an independent estimate of revenue impact. Using the pronoun "we" instead of the noun "EIA" is more informal.

- Spelling out whole words rather than using contractions makes your writing more formal.

Formal language: EIA *will not* comment on the legislation.

Informal language: EIA *won't* comment on the legislation.

- Avoiding colloquial words or expression makes your writing more formal.

**Example #1:**

Formal language: Why are gasoline prices so high?

Informal language: What's behind high gas prices?

**Example #2:**

Formal language: Is there enough oil to meet future needs?

Informal language: Are we running out of oil?

## 7. Using a consistent point of view

In your writing, you can choose to use one of three different points of view: first person, second person, or third person. Each point of view expresses a different relationship to the reader.

### Points of View

**First Person** is when the person or object is speaking: We can produce steam several ways.

**Second Person** is when the person is spoken to: You can produce steam several ways.

**Third Person** is when the object is spoken about: There are several ways to produce steam.

- Do not shift point of view within a unit of content (such as a web page or report).

The point of view that you choose will depend on your audience and the product that you are writing. Once you've chosen your point of view, do not switch point of view.

Shifting point of view: Most commercially available electricity is generated by turbines that convert steam into electricity. You can produce steam in several ways. This paragraph shifts from third person to second person (you).

Consistent point of view: Most commercially available electricity is generated by turbines that convert steam into electricity. Steam is produced in several ways. This paragraph maintains the third person throughout.

## 8. Using singular or plural verbs with indefinite pronouns

Deciding whether an indefinite pronoun such as *neither*, *none*, *everyone*, *no one*, and *some* takes a singular or plural verb can be tricky. These rules can help you decide whether to use the singular or plural.

- When an indefinite pronoun is the subject of a verb it is usually singular.

None of the proposals was accepted.

- If an indefinite pronoun has a plural sense, use a plural verb.

No one could explain the rules because they hadn't read the legislation.

- When comparing two items, you must say "either...or" or "neither...nor."

Neither my officemate nor I was planning to attend the conference.

Either my officemate or my boss left the microwave encrusted with soup.

## 9. Using italics for emphasis

- Use italics sparingly for emphasis to alert the reader to pay careful attention. If used too frequently, italics lose their power. Italics are used to emphasize a word or phrase, rarely a whole sentence or paragraph.

Your comments must be sent by *mail* — *not email*.

- Use italics to set off a non-English word or phrase that would be unfamiliar to the reader. If the foreign phrase is used frequently in the document, use italics only for the first use. If the phrase is used only rarely in the document, use italics for each use.

A *laissez-faire* approach to the market can have serious repercussions.

- Do not use italics if the foreign phrase is commonly used in English. (If the word is listed in [Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary](#), you do not normally use italics.)

The used car had no warranty. Caveat emptor!

- Do not use italics for commonly used Latin words and abbreviations. These common words include:
  - et al.
  - ibid
  - etc.
  - i.e.
  - e.g.

Greenhouse gases (i.e., carbon dioxide) may contribute to global warming.

- Key terms may be italicized on their first use. Do not use italics for subsequent uses.

Some cities are participating in the *Clean Cities* program. Other states may participate in the Clean Cities program in the future.

## 10. Formatting Paragraphs

- Separate paragraphs with a blank line. The first line of a paragraph should be flush left, not indented.

Gasoline prices greatly increased in 2005 because of escalating global demand for oil and severe disruptions to oil production caused by Hurricane Katrina. Because of these factors, gasoline prices rose to \$3.07 per gallon.

In 2004 and 2005, increased global demand for oil stretched capacity along the entire oil market system and caused a surge in crude oil prices.

## Web Editorial Guidelines — Chapter 2 — Commonly Misused Words

### Chapter 2: Commonly Misused Words

Commonly Misused Words	Definition and Example	Definition and Example
accept/except	<b>accept:</b> to receive; to agree I accept your suggestions.	<b>except:</b> apart from; but; excluding We approve all your suggestions except the last one.
advice/advise	<b>advice:</b> recommendation; guidance EIA seeks advice from the American Statistical Association.	<b>advise:</b> to recommend; to suggest We must advise you that email and facsimile are insecure means of transmission.
affect/effect	<b>affect:</b> to influence Policy decisions affect energy markets.	<b>effect:</b> a result; to bring about; being in full force What are the effects of the policy decisions?
aid/aide	<b>aid:</b> the act of helping EIA completed this list to aid educators and students in locating materials.	<b>aide:</b> person acting as an assistant The political candidates brought their campaign aides to the meeting.

alternate/alternative	<p><b>alternate:</b> to change back and forth. Can be used as a verb with or without an object.</p> <p>When I cross-train, I alternate between running and cycling.</p>	<p><b>alternative:</b> a choice between two things or possibilities</p> <p>An alternative to driving your car is taking public transportation.</p> <p>Because the weather is too cold, the alternative is to stay inside.</p>
between/among	<p><b>between:</b> connecting or comparing the space between two objects</p> <p>The driving distance between Baltimore and Philadelphia is surprisingly short.</p>	<p><b>among:</b> in or into the midst of; connecting or comparing more than two objects</p> <p>Feel free to speak freely. You're among friends.</p>
biannual/biennial/semiannual	<p><b>biannual/semiannual:</b> occurring every half year or twice a year.</p> <p>We have a lease agreement requiring that property rental payments be paid on a biannual basis in January and July.</p> <p>This poetry anthology is updated on a semiannual basis in June and December.</p>	<p><b>biennial:</b> occurring every two years</p> <p>Our group's next biennial conference will be in two years.</p> <p>This insect has a biennial lifecycle.</p>

brake/break	<p><b>brake:</b> a device for stopping or slowing motion</p> <p>The system captures excess energy when the driver uses the brake.</p>	<p><b>break:</b> to separate into parts; to smash; a disruption</p> <p>The water in these tubes must be very pure or the tubes might break.</p> <p>New commercial building practices caused a break in the trend.</p>
compare to/compare with	<p><b>compare to:</b> to examine and contrast</p> <p>When compared to the cost of living in New York City, Washington, DC is an affordable city.</p>	<p><b>compare with:</b> to describe as similar to something; to liken to</p> <p>Lawrence Ferlinghetti's poetry can be compared with Allen Ginsberg's.</p>
complement/compliment	<p><b>complement:</b> to complete; something that completes</p> <p>Pipelines complement tankers at key locations by relieving bottlenecks.</p> <p>This Climate Wise Primer is a complement to EIA's Form 1605.</p>	<p><b>compliment:</b> to praise; an expression of praise</p> <p>My boss complimented me for my good work.</p> <p>We take it as a compliment that journalists quote our research.</p>
comprise/compose	<p><b>comprise:</b> to include; to be made up of</p> <p>OPEC's membership comprises 12 member countries.</p>	<p><b>compose:</b> to make up; to form the substance of</p> <p>The candidate composes her thoughts carefully before answering the journalist's question.</p>

continuously/continually	<p><b>continuously:</b> uninterrupted or constant</p> <p>The video plays continuously.</p>	<p><b>continually:</b> reoccurring often</p> <p>We continually review and update our policies.</p>
ensure/insure/assure	<p><b>ensure:</b> to make certain</p> <p>We monitor network traffic to ensure site security.</p>	<p><b>insure:</b> to protect against financial loss</p> <p>Indemnity clubs insure the tankers that transport petroleum imported into the United States.</p> <p><b>assure:</b> to state with confidence; to declare earnestly</p> <p>The director assured the staff that the project budget was adequate.</p>
everyday/every day	<p><b>everyday:</b> commonplace; normal</p> <p>Small amounts of coal are used to manufacture everyday products such as plastics, paints, and inks.</p>	<p><b>every day:</b> each day; regularly</p> <p>The number of single-family households that reported cooking hot meals every day decreased.</p>
farther/further	<p><b>farther:</b> at or to a greater distance</p> <p>An average vehicle traveled farther in 1994 than in 1988.</p>	<p><b>further:</b> moreover; to a greater extent</p> <p>In the United Kingdom, deregulation is further along than it is in other countries.</p>
fewer/less	<p><b>fewer:</b> of a smaller number</p> <p>Express lines at grocery stores should be labeled "15 items or fewer."</p>	<p><b>less:</b> a smaller amount or degree</p> <p>The turnout for the game was less than expected.</p>
forth/fourth	<p><b>forth:</b> forward in time, place, and order</p> <p>Despite setbacks, we are moving forth.</p>	<p><b>fourth:</b> next after the third</p> <p>The Surry nuclear plant is fourth largest in the region.</p>

Internet/intranet	<p><b>Internet:</b> a global system of interconnected public and private computer networks</p> <p>The World Wide Web is just one service that uses the Internet.</p> <p>Note that "Internet" is capitalized.</p>	<p><b>intranet:</b> a private computer network; an internal organizational website</p> <p>Use the intranet to find employee phone numbers.</p> <p>Note that "intranet" is not capitalized.</p>
its/it's	<p><b>its:</b> belonging to it; <i>its</i> is the possessive form of <i>it</i>.</p> <p>EIA has consolidated its analysis of world oil markets into its Short-Term Energy Outlook.</p>	<p><b>it's:</b> it is; <i>it's</i> is a contraction</p> <p>It's cold outside today.</p>
lead/led	<p><b>lead:</b> (verb) to guide; to show the way</p> <p>Our country continues to lead the world in wind power growth.</p> <p><b>lead:</b> (noun) a bluish-white, soft heavy metal</p> <p>Lead was added to gasoline to improve engine performance.</p>	<p><b>led:</b> past tense of the verb <i>lead</i></p> <p>Improved technology led to deeper reservoir drilling and access to more resources.</p>
loose/lose	<p><b>loose:</b> not tight</p> <p>The loose standards extend throughout the industry and allow for abuse.</p>	<p><b>lose:</b> to give up; to misplace</p> <p>Both oil and natural gas lose market share to coal.</p>
maybe/may be	<p><b>maybe:</b> perhaps; possible</p> <p>Maybe I will be able to come to the meeting tomorrow.</p>	<p><b>may be:</b> might be; could be</p> <p>I may be able to come to the meeting tomorrow.</p>

more than/over	<p><b>more than:</b> of a greater quantity</p> <p>The costs of public transportation are sometimes more than the costs of driving and parking a car.</p>	<p><b>over:</b> above or in excess of</p> <p>The bridge on Route 50 crosses over the Severn River.</p>
online/on-line	<p><b>online:</b> involving the Internet</p> <p>When you're on the Internet, you're online.</p>	<p><b>on-line:</b> operational, ready for use</p> <p>The nuclear power reactor came on-line last year.</p>
pair/pare	<p><b>pair:</b> two of a kind</p> <p>Each module has a pair of small, high-capacity turbines.</p>	<p><b>pare:</b> to reduce; to peel</p> <p>We should pare down this extensive set of instructions to three simple steps.</p>
personal/personnel	<p><b>personal:</b> private</p> <p>We do not collect personal information for any purpose other than to respond to you.</p>	<p><b>personnel:</b> employees</p> <p>The UN Secretary-General announced the withdrawal of all humanitarian personnel from Iraq.</p>
precede/proceed	<p><b>precede:</b> to go before</p> <p>The 1992 and 1994 editions precede the current one.</p>	<p><b>proceed:</b> to continue</p> <p>The ventilation system removes methane while mining operations proceed.</p>
principal/principle	<p><b>principal:</b> foremost</p> <p>The principal use for this wax is in candles.</p> <p><b>principal:</b> head of a school</p> <p>Mr. Jones was named principal of Maywood Elementary School.</p> <p><b>principal:</b> a sum of money</p> <p>You paid back the principal of your loan.</p>	<p><b>principle:</b> a rule; standard of good behavior</p> <p>The decision was based on principle, not profit.</p>

seams/seems	<p><b>seams:</b> lines formed by sewing together fabric, or a fissure or crack across a surface</p> <p>Coal comes from a deep seam in the earth.</p>	<p><b>seems:</b> appears</p> <p>Gasoline demand in the Midwest seems to be growing faster.</p>
sight/cite/site	<p><b>sight:</b> the act of seeing</p> <p>Customers were excited by the sight of the new model.</p> <p><b>cite:</b> to quote</p> <p>Please cite all of your sources of information.</p>	<p><b>site:</b> a location</p> <p>We don't know how much radium-bearing material is processed at the Canonsburg Mill site.</p>
stationary/stationery	<p><b>stationary:</b> not movable</p> <p>The monitor is stationary so you'll have to move your chair if you cannot see it.</p>	<p><b>stationery:</b> writing paper</p> <p>Our office will need to order more stationery with our logo on it.</p>
than/then	<p><b>than:</b> compared with</p> <p>Developed economies use oil much more intensively than the developing economies.</p>	<p><b>then:</b> at that time; next in time</p> <p>The maps were developed using GIS software and then converted to PDF format.</p>

their/there/they're	<p><b>their:</b> belonging to them</p> <p>We used their research in our book.</p> <p><b>they're:</b> contraction of <i>they are</i></p> <p>The refineries undergo maintenance when they're switching over from heating oil to the spring gasoline system.</p>	<p><b>there:</b> in that place</p> <p>Place your signed application over there, on the counter.</p>
thorough/through/threw	<p><b>thorough:</b> complete; painstaking</p> <p>Before hiring a new person, the company conducts a thorough background check of the applicant.</p> <p><b>through:</b> from side to side or from end to end; completed</p> <p>The DOE list includes resources for students in kindergarten through twelfth grade. I am through with this assignment.</p>	<p><b>threw:</b> tossed</p> <p>Because your son threw the ball, your insurance will not pay to replace the window.</p>
weather/whether	<p><b>weather:</b> state of atmospheric conditions</p> <p>The city's website has a link to the local weather forecast.</p>	<p><b>whether:</b> used to introduce alternative possibilities</p> <p>This figure indicates whether markets have the right amount of oil.</p>
web/the Web	<p><b>web:</b> an adjective meaning "related to the World Wide Web;" when used as an adjective, "web" is lowercased.</p> <p>I did web research to write my term paper.</p>	<p><b>the Web:</b> short for the World Wide Web, when used as a noun.</p> <p>I used the Web to research my vacation.</p>

website/web page	<p><b>website:</b> a collection of web pages. EIA uses "website" as a compound word.</p> <p>EIA's website contains lots of information.</p> <p>"Webcast" is also a compound word.</p>	<p><b>web page:</b> a single web page (with a single URL). EIA uses "web page" as two words, where "web" is an adjective.</p> <p>I researched electricity information on EIA's web page.</p>
which/that	<p><b>which:</b> a pronoun used to introduce non-essential information. In most cases, use a comma before <i>which</i>.</p> <p>The price of crude oil, which started the year at about \$42 per barrel, reached \$70 per barrel in early September.</p>	<p><b>that:</b> a pronoun used to introduce essential information. Don't use a comma before <i>that</i>.</p> <p>Electric power plants that burn fossil fuels emit pollutants linked to acid rain.</p>
your/you're	<p><b>your:</b> belonging to you</p> <p>Your electricity use is measured with a meter.</p>	<p><b>you're:</b> contraction for "you are"</p> <p>You're likely to see energy prices increase.</p>

## Web Editorial Guidelines — Chapter 3 — Hyphens and Dashes

### Chapter 3: Hyphens and Dashes

#### 1. Hyphenating compound words

The rules for using hyphens in compound words are somewhat flexible. Compound words frequently have a "hyphen stage" when they are newly combined, then the hyphen disappears as the compound is commonly used and becomes one word. For example, *on line* became *on-line* and is now *online*.

- Use a hyphen between words when they are combined to modify the word that follows.

agreed-upon standards  
Baltimore-Washington Parkway  
collective-bargaining talks  
cost-of-living increase

\* Do not use a hyphen between compound words when the meaning is clear without the hyphen and the hyphen will not aid readability.

atomic energy power  
bituminous coal industry  
child welfare plan  
civil rights case

- Use a hyphen with proper noun compounds.

Spanish-American pride  
Winston-Salem festival  
African-American program  
Franco-Prussian War

- Retain the hyphens when two or more hyphenated compounds have a common element and this element is omitted in all but the last term.

moss- and ivy-covered walls  
long- and short-term money rates

- A hyphen is not required when one of the two modifiers before a noun is an adverb that ends in "-ly."

individually wrapped cheese  
independently verified data

- Do not use a hyphen in a compound that includes a non-English phrase.

bona fide transaction  
ex officio member  
per capita tax

## 2. Using a hyphen to prevent mispronunciation or to avoid ambiguity

- In some cases, you should use a hyphen to prevent mispronunciation or to avoid ambiguity.

mid-decade  
non-civil-service position  
pre-position  
re-creation  
re-sorting  
un-ionized

## 3. Using hyphens with numbers

- Use a hyphen when the number is a descriptor and a modifier for numbers between 21 and 99.

24-inch ruler  
10-minute delay  
3-to-1 ratio

- Use a hyphen between the elements of a fraction.

one-thousandth  
two-thirds  
three-fourths of an inch

#### 4. Using hyphens with civil and military titles

- Do not use a hyphen with a civil or military title denoting a single office, but do use a hyphen for a double title.

*Examples of single title*

- comptroller general
- Congressman at Large
- major general

*Examples of double title*

- secretary-treasurer
- treasurer-manager

*Use a hyphen with the adjectives elect and designate.*

- President-elect
- Vice-President-elect
- Secretary of Housing and Urban Development-designate
- ambassador-designate

#### 5. Using hyphens with age terms

- Use a hyphen with both the noun and adjective forms of age terms.

*Example of noun form:* A 55-year-old won the lottery yesterday.

*Example of adjective form:* The three-year-old nuclear reactor will be closed for a safety evaluation.

## **6. List of commonly hyphenated words and phrases**

### **List of commonly hyphenated words and phrases**

agreed-upon standards

around-the-clock basis

cost-of-living increase

day-ahead schedule

drought-stricken area

English-speaking nation

ex-governor

full-power days

government-owned stocks

heating degree-days

high-speed line

land-use restrictions

large-scale project

light-year

line-item veto

long-term contract

long-term loan

low-cost housing

lump-sum payment

market-based pricing

multiple-purpose uses

non-profit corporation

off-highway use

one-on-one situation

part-time personnel

passenger-mile

quasi-academic

self-contained units

self-control

self-educated

state-of-the-art technology

T-shaped

U.S.-owned property

up-or-down vote

For more information on hyphens, see:

- [\*Chicago Manual of Style, Chapter 6: Punctuation\*](#)
- [GPO Style Manual, Chapter 6: Compounding Rules](#) and [Chapter 7: Compounding Examples](#)

## 7. Using a hyphen vs. using a dash

- A dash (also known as an *em dash*) is twice as wide as a hyphen and is used with one space on either side. A dash and a hyphen have different uses and are *not* interchangeable.

The three-year-old nuclear reactor — located at Crystal Lake — will be closed for a safety evaluation.

- To type a dash in a word processing program like Microsoft Word®, hold the [Ctrl] and [Alt] keys and press the [minus sign] key on the number pad. In Dreamweaver, go to the Insert tab, click on Symbols, Special characters, and choose the em dash. It should be the first item on the drop-down list.

- Use a dash to indicate a sudden break or abrupt change in thought.

Consumption of liquid fuels is projected to decline in 2008 — a sharp reversal from previous projections.

- Use a dash before the final clause that summarizes a series of ideas.

Freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and freedom to assemble — these are cornerstones of American democracy.

## Web Editorial Guidelines — Chapter 4 — Commas

### Chapter 4: Commas

#### 1. Using commas with listed items within sentences

- Use commas to separate three or more items in a list. Don't forget the comma between the last two items.

The pump price reflects the costs of refiners, marketers, distributors, and retail gas station owners.

The American flag is red, white, and blue.

#### 2. Using commas with introductory phrases

- Use a comma after introductory words, phrases or clauses.

After drafting the regulations, the agency called for comments.

- Using a comma after a short introductory phrase is optional.

In addition, Federal taxes are added to the price of gasoline.

- Don't use a comma after an introductory phrase that is followed by a verb.

Issuing the regulations begins the review process.

*Introductory phrase*      *verb*

### 3. Using commas with clauses

- Use commas to set off supplemental or parenthetical information.
- Do not use commas if the phrase or clause restricts the meaning such as deleting the phrase or clause alters the meaning of the sentence or makes the meaning unclear.

The amendments, adopted in 1960, set forth the enforcement role of the local committees.

The commas setting off adopted in 1960 signify that the date of adoption informs, but does not restrict which amendments are being discussed.

The amendments adopted in 1960 specified the enforcement role of the local committees.

Without commas the sentence indicates that the amendments that were adopted in 1960 set forth the role of local committees. The phrase restricts which amendments are being discussed.

- The words *which* and *that* are not interchangeable. You use the word *which* in cases where the text that follows elaborates on the first part of the sentence. You use the word *that* in cases where the sentence doesn't need a comma to break up the two thoughts in the sentence.
- Use a comma before a clause that begins with *which*.
- Do not use a comma before *that*.

EIA's conference chairs, which are old, will be replaced.

*(All of EIA's conference chairs will be replaced because they all happen to be old.)*

EIA's conference chairs that are old will be replaced.

*(Only EIA's old conference chairs will be replaced, but the new ones will not be replaced.)*

For more information on using *which* and *that*, see:

- [Chapter 2: Commonly Misused Words](#)
- [Chicago Manual of Style, Chapter 6: Punctuation, Restrictive and nonrestrictive](#)

#### 4. Using commas with conjunctions

- Use a comma when two complete sentences are separated by a conjunction such as *and* or *but*.

I would like to attend the conference, but I can't find information about how to register.

Paul pumped the gas, and Mary got a soda.

Paul pumped the gas and got a soda.

#### 5. Using a comma to separate a name from a title

John Smith, human resources director, issued the regulations regarding leave.

#### 6. Using commas in dates

- Use a comma to separate the date from the year.

The data were posted on October 4, 2008.

- Do not use a comma to separate the month from the year.

The data were posted in October 2008.

## Web Editorial Guidelines — Chapter 5 — Colons and Semicolons

### Chapter 5: Colons and Semicolons

#### 1. Using colons with bulleted or numbered lists

- Use a colon to introduce a bulleted or numbered list if it's introduced by a phrase or a sentence.

The price that consumers pay for heating oil can change for a variety of reasons:

- Seasonal demand
- Fluctuations in crude oil prices
- Competition in local markets

- But omit the colon if a subheading introduces a list.

#### Forecasts

- Annual Energy Outlook
- Short-Term Energy Outlook
- International Energy Outlook

- For more information on punctuating lists, see [Chapter 10, Section 4](#).

#### 2. Using colons with examples

- Use a colon to introduce an example or explanation of the idea to the left of the colon. The word following the colon is normally lowercase.

The requirement for claiming a tax credit is clear: you must have purchased the product in 2007.

#### 3. Using semicolons to join independent clauses

- Use a semicolon instead of a period to join two independent clauses (sentences) to emphasize a close relationship between the two clauses. Do not capitalize the word after the semicolon.

The report is on our website; you can download it.

- Use a semicolon between two independent clauses (sentences) joined by a transition word such as *therefore* and *however*.

The price of the car is high; however, it includes taxes.

#### 4. Using semicolons in a series

- Use a semicolon to separate the items in a series when the items already include commas.

Our regional offices are in Miami, Florida; Chicago, Illinois; and Phoenix, Arizona.

## Web Editorial Guidelines — Chapter 6 — Punctuating Quoted Text

### Chapter 6: Punctuating Quoted Text

#### 1. Using quotation marks with direct quotes

- Use quotation marks to set off direct quotes.

The Senator said, "We must pass the legislation during this session."

- Do not use quotation marks if the text is paraphrased.

The Senator said that it is important to pass the legislation in this session.

#### 2. Using a comma to set off quoted text

- Use a comma to separate text from quoted material when the quoted material is a complete sentence or paragraph.

The President said, "All Federal employees will have the Friday after Christmas off."

- Integrate short quotes into the text; but indent a block of long text. The press spokesman explained the purpose of the new publications:

"Energy education is a critical part of EIA's mission. At a time when American consumers face many energy-related challenges, it is more important than ever to provide the public with reliable energy information in a format that is useful and accessible by the widest possible audience."

- Don't use a comma to separate text from quoted material when the quoted material is a phrase or fragment integrated into the sentence.

The director said that energy consumption in transportation had "increased significantly."

#### 3. Using punctuation marks with closed quotation marks

- Place a period or comma inside the closing quotation marks.

EIA is required to report "the number and type of alternative fuel vehicles in existence."

"Clean air standards are under review," said the director.

- Place colons, semi-colons, question marks and exclamation points outside of closing quotation marks, unless a question mark or exclamation point is part of the quoted material.

Which Congressional staffer said, "You must complete the report by the end of the fiscal year"?

The director asked, "Do you have a deadline for the project?"

#### **4. Using single quotation marks to set off quoted content within quotation marks**

The director explained, "The HR handbook says 'employees have two weeks of annual leave,' not three weeks."

#### **5. Using ellipsis points in quoted text**

- Use ellipsis points — three dots or periods — to indicate the omission of text from a quoted passage. Do not use a space between the dots. (...)

"The regulations specify clean air standards...and compliance regulations."

- Ellipsis may be combined with other punctuation, such as a comma, period, or question mark. There is no space between the ellipsis and the punctuation.

Will you come...?

## Web Editorial Guidelines — Chapter 7 — Capitalization

### Chapter 7: Capitalization

#### 1. Capitalizing web page titles and headings

The general rule is to capitalize the first letter of each main word in a web page title, heading, or subheading. EIA titles and headings follow an "initial capitalization" style, which means you must:

- Capitalize the initial letter of the *first word*, the *last word*, and *all main words*. Main words include nouns, verbs (*is, are, have been, run*), adverbs, adjectives (*this, that, its, his*) and pronouns (*him, her, it, them*).
- Always capitalize words of four letters or more.
- Do not capitalize articles (*a, an, the*), connector words (*as, and, but, or*), or short prepositions (*of, in, at, from*) unless they begin or end a title or a heading.

Projected Summer Gasoline Prices Are Near Last Summer's Level  
Chavez's Opponents Accuse Him of Squandering Venezuela's Resources  
North American Electric Reliability Regions Map  
U.S. Petroleum Administration for Defense Districts (PADD) Map  
International Energy Data and Analysis

- Capitalize all first and last words in titles and headings.

The Signal Scientists Wait For

- Capitalize hyphenated words that would be capitalized if standing alone.

Cross-Referenced List of University Research Centers  
Read/Write Access Rules

- Do not capitalize hyphenated words if those words would be lowercased if standing alone.

Renewable and non-Renewable Fuels

#### 2. Capitalize the word "to"

- Always capitalize the word *to* when it precedes a verb.

Researchers To Discuss Recent Findings  
How To Subscribe to the Newsletter

- Do not capitalize *to* in other uses.

Add International Data to Your Sample Set

### 3. Capitalizing navigational hyperlinks

- The first word in navigational links should be capitalized and should follow the same capitalization rules established for titles and headings. When a navigational link is a statement or a sentence, capitalize the link as you would a sentence.

*Navigational link that is a title or heading:* The [Primer on Diesel Fuel Prices](#) explains how diesel fuel is made.

*Navigational link that is a sentence:* [Sign up for email updates](#)

### 4. Capitalizing embedded hypertext links

- When the text in the embedded link is the title of a publication, etc., match the link capitalization to the capitalization of the publication's title.

[Electric Power Monthly](#) released mid-month  
Please see [What's New in the International Petroleum Monthly](#) for details of an important revision in this month's report.

- When the text in the embedded link is not a title, use lower case.

Information on [pipeline capacity](#) covers all four regions of the United States.

- Do not capitalize embedded links that are not proper nouns or titles.

The report is also released in [print](#).

## 5. Capitalizing governmental references

- Capitalize *Federal*, *State*, or *Government* when it substitutes for, or refers to, Government at the State and Federal level.

Federal and State taxes are a large component of the retail price of gasoline.  
I pay taxes to the State of California.  
The natural gas pipeline crossed three States.

- Capitalize *Federal Government*.

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is a program of the Federal Government.

- Do not capitalize government entities below the State level.

Both county and city governments levy gasoline taxes.

- Capitalize the full names and shortened names of governmental organizations.

The U.S. Congress is considering amendments to energy legislation. The Congress did not pass the amendments.

*Note:* Remember to be consistent in capitalization of governmental references within each document you publish.

## 6. Capitalizing acts, treaties, and government programs

- Capitalize formal or accepted titles of rules, pacts, plans, policies, treaties, acts, programs, and similar documents or agreements.

The Clean Air Interstate Rule (CAIR) was promulgated by the EPA in March 2005. This rule was published in the Federal Register.

- Do not capitalize incomplete or generic forms of acts, treaties and government programs.

The treaty set international standards.

- For more information on capitalizing governmental entities, see:
  - *GPO Style Manual*, [Chapter 3: Capitalization rules](#) and [Chapter 4: Capitalization examples](#)

## 7. Capitalizing the names of regions, localities, and geographic features

- Capitalize the popular names of places.

the Persian Gulf  
Gulf of Mexico  
Eastern United States  
the Midwest  
Middle East  
Silicon Valley  
North Sea

- For more information on capitalizing names of regions, localities, and geographic features, see:
  - *The Chicago Manual of Style*: [Popular Names and Terms](#)

## 8. Capitalization style for words and terms frequently used by EIA

Administration (*when referring to executive branch of Federal Government*)

British thermal unit (Btu)

crude oil

*But* capitalize specific types or blends, e.g., Brent Bend, West Texas Intermediate

Department of Energy

DOE

email

Send an email.

email list (*Not "listserv," which is a protected trademark that EIA may not use.*)

Energy Information Administration

EIA (*Not "the EIA"*)

Federal Register

Federal Register notice

Forrestal Building

homepage

Imported Refiner Acquisition Cost  
IRAC

kilowatthour (kWh)

megawatt (MW)

NYMEX futures

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development  
OECD

Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries  
OPEC

## 9. Capitalization style for Internet-related words

Internet

Internet service provider (ISP)

*But* intranet

World Wide Web

the Web (*short for World Wide Web*)

website

web page (*"web" is lowercased when used as an adjective*)

webcast

webcasting

## 10. Using bold for emphasis, not capitals

- Do not capitalize for emphasis. Use bold instead of uppercase when you want to emphasize a word or phrase.

## 11. Capitalizing bulleted or numbered lists

- Capitalize the first word in a bulleted or numbered list, even if the listed items are not sentences.

The four types of coal prices are spot price, captive price, open market price, and delivered price.

- Spot price is the price for a one-time open market transaction for immediate delivery purchased "on the spot" at current market rates.
- Captive price is the price for coal used by the producing company or sold to affiliated or parent companies.
- Open market price is the price of coal sold on the open market to companies other than the reporting company's parent company, a subsidiary of the parent company, or to consumers.
- Delivered price is the price of coal including transportation costs to the consuming sector.

In 2006, the United States consumed nearly 22 trillion cubic feet (Tcf) of natural gas by the following seven natural gas end users:

1. Industrial — 6.6 Tcf (30.0%)
2. Electric power generation — 6.2 Tcf (28.4%)
3. Residential — 4.4 Tcf (20.4%)
4. Commercial — 2.9 Tcf (13.3 %)
5. Lease and plant fuel consumption — 1.1 Tcf (5.1%)
6. Pipeline and distribution — 573.7 Bcf (2.6%)
7. Vehicle fuel — 24.2 Bcf (1%)

## Web Editorial Guidelines — Chapter 8 — Abbreviations

### Chapter 8: Abbreviations

#### 1. Defining abbreviations, acronyms, and initialisms

- In this guide, *abbreviation* will be used generically to refer to *abbreviations*, *acronyms*, and *initialisms*.

<i>Abbreviation</i>	Shortened form of a word or phrase.  f.o.b. (Novices may not know that f.o.b.= "free on board.") Ph.D. (traditional usage) PhD (modern usage)
<i>Acronym</i>	A word formed from the initial letters of other words.  OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries)
<i>Initialism</i>	A term read as a series of letters.  EIA MER

#### 2. Spelling out a term the first time it is used

- Spell out a term for the first use and follow it with the abbreviation in parentheses.

This issue of the Monthly Flash Estimate (MFE) is now available on EIA's electricity page. The MFE provides the highlights of the upcoming Electric Power Monthly publication.

The Energy Information Administration's (EIA) projection shows the price of natural gas increasing.

- If an abbreviation hasn't been used for many pages in a long document, spell it out again.
- In general, avoid using too many abbreviations. In a short document, try to avoid using abbreviations at all, especially if the term will only be used once or twice.
- For more information on abbreviations, see:
  - [EIA's current list of energy-related abbreviations](#)
  - [GovSpeak: A Guide to Government Acronyms & Abbreviations](#)
  - *GPO Style Manual*, [Chapter 9: Abbreviations and Letter Symbols](#)
  - *Chicago Manual of Style*, [Chapter 15: Abbreviations](#)

### 3. Abbreviating and spelling out United States

- Spell out *United States* when it is used as a noun.

Temperatures vary across the United States.

- Use the abbreviation *U.S.* when it's used as an adjective, such as when it precedes *Government* or the name of a Government organization or a domestic energy statistic. Always use periods in *U.S.* (*not* *US*).

Each committee reports to the U.S. Congress regarding national energy needs and resources.

U.S. oil production rose in 1999.

- Spell out *United States* when it appears in a sentence containing the name of another country.

Mexico imports United States coal and Canadian natural gas.

### 4. Abbreviating the names of States and foreign countries

- In running text, spell out the State name when it stands alone or when it follows the name of a city.

Less than 5,000 megawatts of new capacity is projected to come on line in California by 2004.

Prior to joining the organization in January 2004, Ms. Darby worked as a

petroleum geologist for five years in Los Angeles, California and Houston, Texas.

- In bibliographies, lists, and mailing addresses, use the [U.S. Postal Service's two-letter no-period abbreviations](#).

California: CA  
Virginia: VA

- Don't abbreviate the names of foreign countries except the former U.S.S.R., which is abbreviated due to its length.

## 5. Using periods with abbreviations

- Most abbreviations are used without periods, especially the ones that are pronounced letter by letter, including units of measure.

ATM  
Kg  
DOE  
OPEC  
Gal  
Btu

- Use no periods with abbreviations that appear in capitals, whether two letters or more.

OECD  
OPEC  
MER  
AER  
AEO

- Use no periods or spaces after initials in the abbreviations of government agencies or other bodies.

DOE  
YMCA  
NBC

- If an abbreviation that takes a period is used at the end of a sentence, a single period is used.

The project team will meet at 10:30 a.m.

## 6. Using a or an before abbreviations

- If the abbreviation starts with a consonant sound, use *a*. If the abbreviation starts with a vowel sound, use *an*.

a TVA project  
an EIA forecast

## 7. Forming plural abbreviations

- Add an *s* to form a plural abbreviation.

FAQs  
FTEs  
LDCs

Exception: Btu — do not add an *s* to the end of Btu because the "u" stands for units, which is already plural.

- Add an apostrophe before the *s* if the abbreviation consists of lowercase letters or a single letter.

She earned all A's on her report card.

## 8. Forming possessive abbreviations

- To form a singular possessive, use an apostrophe before the *s*.

DOE's policy  
OPEC's members  
This LDC's price hike

- To form a plural possessive, use an apostrophe after the *s*.

The RNs' strike  
The various local LDCs' price hikes

## 9. Abbreviating months

- Names of months followed by the day, or day and year, may be abbreviated in footnotes, tables, and bibliographies where space is limited. EIA uses the style where periods are omitted and all months are written as three-letter abbreviations.

In a table:

Jan	Jul
Feb	Aug
Mar	Sep
Apr	Oct
May	Nov
Jun	Dec

In text: February in Washington, DC can be brutally cold.

February 12, 2009 or Feb. 12, 2009

February 2009

In a footnote: Refinery shutdowns in the Gulf of Mexico region totaled 367,000 barrels per day (Dec. 15, 2005).

## 10. Using abbreviations with time

- Abbreviated time zones are written without periods.

### **Weekly On-Highway Diesel Prices**

*Release Schedule:* Monday between 4:00 and 5:00 p.m. EST

- Time of day. Use lowercase and periods. The abbreviation for *ante meridiem* (before noon) is *a.m.* and the abbreviation for *post meridiem* (after noon) is *p.m.*

10:00 a.m.

2:30 p.m.

## 11. Abbreviating academic degrees

- In traditional practice, periods are added to abbreviations of all academic degrees (M.A., Ph.D., etc.). We recommend omitting the periods unless they are required for tradition or consistency.

MA

PhD

## 12. Abbreviating units of measure

### **Abbreviation: Unit of measure**

bbl: barrel(s)

Bcf: billion cubic feet

bbl/d: barrels per day

Btu: British thermal units

°C: degrees Celsius

CDD: cooling degree-day

°F: degrees Fahrenheit

gal: gallon(s)

gal/s: gallons per second  
GWe: gigawatt electric  
GWh: gigawatthour(s)  
HDD: heating degree-day  
kW: Kilowatt  
kWh: kilowatthour(s)  
Mbbbl: thousand barrels  
Mbbbl/d: thousand barrels per day  
Mcf: thousand cubic feet  
MMbbbl/d: million barrels per day  
MMBtu: million British thermal units  
MMcf: million cubic feet  
MMgal/d: million gallons per day  
MMst: million short tons  
mpg: mile(s) per gallon  
Mst: thousand short tons  
MW: Megawatt  
MWh: Megawatthour(s)  
st: short ton  
Tcf: trillion cubic feet  
V: Volt  
W: Watt  
Wh: Watthour

## Web Editorial Guidelines — Chapter 9 — Numbers

### Chapter 9: Numbers

#### 1. Writing out numbers or numerals

- Write out numbers from one through nine.

The five renewable energy sources used most often are biomass, hydropower, geothermal, wind, and solar.

- Use numerals for numbers 10 and above.

In this report, the Energy Information Administration presents 10 major energy trends in the United States.

Nearly 30 million tons of trash were processed last year in waste-to-energy facilities.

- Write out any number that begins a sentence.

Thirty-one municipalities have proposed commercial nuclear power plants.

- Write out ordinal numbers (a number that indicates rank) under 10; use numerals for ordinal numbers 10 and above.

China is the fifth largest producer of oil.

As of January 2005, Louisiana ranked 15th in nuclear capacity.

- Use numerals for each number when 2 or more numbers appear in a sentence and 1 of them is 10 or larger.

Last month, 8 of the 16 geothermal sites were evaluated.

Use numerals (not words) until one million.

3,000, *not* 3 thousand

3 million, *not* 3,000,000

## 2. Writing out or using numeral for fractions

- Write out simple fractions.

Compact fluorescent bulbs need about one-third of the power required by incandescent bulbs to emit the same amount of light.

Coal typically fuels about nine-tenths of net electricity generation in Ohio.

- Use numerals for mixed fractions.

The 7½ inch-pipeline crosses two States.

- Write out fractions that are followed by *a*, *of*, or *of an*.

Almost one-fourth of the energy used in homes is used for lighting and appliances.

- Use numerals in fractions that are followed by a unit of measure.

The coal beds are at least 3¼ miles apart.

## 3. Writing out or using the symbol for percent

- Express percentages in numerals.

During 2000, the CPI inflation rate rose by 3 percent. The oil price shocks result in a 75-percent rise in gas prices.

- Use the percent symbol (%) or the word *percent* consistently within a document. Use *percent* in most EIA documents. Do not put a space between the number and the percent symbol (%).

In the IEO2008 reference case, world coal consumption increases by 74 percent from 2004 to 2030, and international coal trade increases by 44 percent from 2005 to 2030.

Almost 50% of U.S. oil imports comes from the Western Hemisphere; only 16% comes for the Persian Gulf.

## 4. Using numerals with units of measure

Energy estimates may be converted to metric units by using the relationship: 1 Btu is approximately equal to 1,055 joules.

A mid-size passenger car has between 110 and 119 cubic feet of interior passenger and luggage space.

A 75-watt incandescent bulb costs about 75 cents and has a rated life of 750 hours.

## 5. Using numbers with currency

- Write out the word *cents* when writing about cents only (when not writing about dollars).

The price of gasoline went up 15 cents last week.

- If the number expressing an amount of money is spelled out, so are the words dollars or cents. If numerals are used, they are accompanied by the symbol \$ or ¢.

The average coal-fired power plant costs \$850 million to build.

## 6. Mixing numerals and written-out numbers for very large numbers

- To make large numbers (beginning with *million*) easier to read, mix numerals and written-out numbers.

In December 2007, two countries exported more than 1.5 million barrels per day to the United States.

Libya has eight oil fields with reserves of 10 billion barrels or more each, and four others with reserves of 500 million to 10 billion barrels.

## 7. Writing out or using numerals for dates and years

- Use numerals to refer to a span of years, but omit the first two digits of the second number.

NHTSA determined the maximum feasible average fuel economy levels for the Model Year 2005-07 standards.

- Don't abbreviate the year. Use all four digits; don't omit the first two digits.

New investment in clean energy sources worldwide soared in 2008.

- Write out the number associated with a century if the number is under 10. Use lower case.

Wood fueled the country from its earliest years through the middle of the 19th century.

Chinese merchants and traders arrived and settled in the ninth century.

- Write out decades in lowercase, or use numerals. If you use numerals, do not use the apostrophe between the numerals and the *s*.

We are still using the car that we bought in the early '90s.

In the 1980s and 1990s, several factors raised competitive pressures within the U.S. coal industry.

- Preferred style: Jan 3  
Optional style: Jan 3rd

## 8. Writing out or using numerals for time

- Write out the numbers when combined with the word *o'clock*.

Every day, Marie Curie would go to her cold little room and read until two or three o'clock in the morning.

- Use numerals for exact times that are followed by a.m. or p.m.

Several thousand customers were affected by yesterday's 5:15 a.m. power outage.

- Write out the words *noon* and *midnight* and combine with numerals. Don't use 12:00 p.m. or 12:00.

The Day-Of market will run from 9:00 a.m. through 12:00 noon, Wednesday, January 31, 2008.

Ending stocks are held in storage as of 12:00 midnight on the last day of the month.

## 9. Using commas in numerals of four digits or more

- Use commas between groups of three digits, starting from the right, to show thousands, millions, etc.

A short ton is a unit of weight equal to 2,000 pounds.

PV cells and module shipments increased from 181,116 to 226,916 peak kilowatthours.

## 10. Using decimals

- Use a zero before a decimal point if there is no value in the first place to the left of the decimal.

In 2030, residential energy expenditures are 0.4 percent to 0.8 percent of household income.

About 0.7 million bbl/d of non-OPEC supply growth is projected in 2008.

- Round to a whole number unless it is important to show the exact number.

Estimates of crude oil imports in February 2008 show that two countries exported more than 15 million barrels per day to the United States.

Monthly data reports on crude oil imports in February 2008 show that two countries exported more than 15.013 million barrels per day to the United States.

- Omit zeros after a decimal point unless they indicate exact measurement and the audience needs to know the level of significance.

OPEC crude oil production will average about 32.2 million bbl/d during the first quarter of 2008.

- The number of significant digits might vary within a document. You don't have to show the same number of digits for each figure you write within a document.

For more information on numbers, see Chicago Manual of Style, [Chapter 9: Numbers](#) and GPO Style Manual, [Chapter 12: Numerals](#).

## 11. Formatting Phone Numbers

- Show the area code and use hyphens between number groups.

**Technical Inquiries**  
Phone: 202-586-8959

## Web Editorial Guidelines — Chapter 10 — Itemized Lists

### Chapter 10: Itemized Lists

To improve the scannability of web pages, use vertical lists rather than continuous text to display a series of related items.

#### 1. Introducing lists within text

- Introduce the list with a statement that encompasses all of the items in the list.
- Use a colon at the end of the introductory statement.

The price that consumers pay for heating oil can change for a variety of reasons:

- Seasonal demand
- Fluctuations in crude oil prices
- Competition in local markets

#### 2. Introducing lists of links or items

- Provide a descriptive heading at the top of each list and don't use a colon.

##### Forecasts

- [Annual Energy Outlook](#)
- [Short-Term Energy Outlook](#)
- [International Energy Outlook](#)

##### Recent Country Analysis Brief Updates

- China
- Argentina
- Iraq
- Mexico

#### 3. Using parallel structure for each item in the list

- Begin each item with the same type of word (noun, verb, infinitive, etc.).

Bullets that are *not* parallel:

How to create effective teams:

- To find the best solution to our problems
- Asking people to help us with the solution
- Identify champions for solution teams
- Strategic goals
- And have regular meetings

Bullets that *are* parallel:

To reduce natural gas bills, customers can:

- Check appliances for efficient operation
- Obtain an energy audit
- Reduce thermostat settings

- Use the same grammatical form for each item (word, phrase, or sentence).

The four types of coal prices are:

- Spot price
- Captive price
- Open market price
- Delivered price

The working group should meet periodically to perform the following functions:

- Evaluate the Department's progress in meeting milestones.
- Provide suggestions for improving management and technical performance.
- Collaborate on systems analysis to understand the impacts of alternative technologies.

- Present the same type of information, in a similar format, to make the information easier for readers to understand.

Relevant definitions include:

- Deepwater — water depth that is greater than 200 but less than 1,500 meters
- Ultra-deepwater — a water depth that is equal to or greater than 1,500 meters

We emitted more CO<sub>2</sub> from petroleum than other energy fuels:

- **Petroleum:** 2.6 billion metric tons (44%)
- **Coal:** 2.1 billion metric tons (36%)
- **Natural gas:** 1.2 billion metric tons (20%)

#### Learn More:

- For projections of U.S. energy-related carbon dioxide emissions, see: *Annual Energy Outlook*.
- For projections of foreign energy-related carbon dioxide emissions, see: *International Energy Outlook*.

#### 4. Punctuating itemized lists

- Listed items require no end punctuation, unless the listed items are complete sentences. Items that are sentences are followed by a period.
- Do not use commas or semicolons at the end of each list item.

Because the United States is the world's largest importer, it is easy to forget that it is:

- The oldest major global oil producer
- Formerly the number one global oil producer
- Currently the number number global oil producer

Several consumer trends have increased demand and offset these gains:

- Homes are larger and consume more energy.
- Appliances such as flat screen TVs are larger and consume more energy.
- Computers and other electronic devices increase the demand for energy.

#### 5. Capitalizing items in a list

- Capitalize the first word of each item in a list, even if the listed items are not sentences.

Three factors compel the United States to reconsider how it produces, delivers, and uses energy:

- Energy security
- Environmental quality
- International competition

#### 6. Using numbered lists

- Use numbered lists to indicate steps, sequence, or ranking.

To sign up for email subscriptions:

1. Enter your email address.
2. Check the names of the publications you'd like to receive.
3. Click subscribe.

- Use numbered lists to rank order or count the content.

During 2006, our five biggest suppliers of petroleum products were:

1. Canada (17.2%)
2. Mexico (12.4%)
3. Saudi Arabia (10.7%)
4. Venezuela (10.4%)
5. Nigeria (8.1%)

This report has two purposes:

1. To provide background information on alternative transportation fuels.
2. To furnish preliminary estimates of the use of these fuels and of alternative fuel vehicles.

## 7. Using bulleted lists

- Use bulleted lists when the number of items is not important and the list is not about steps or procedures.

Steam is produced in several ways:

- From water that is boiled by burning fossil fuels, nuclear fission, or biomass materials
- From geothermal resources where steam under pressure emerges from the ground and drives a turbine
- From a fluid heated by the sun (solar power)

## 8. Ordering bulleted lists

- When determining the order of the listed information, consider what order is most logical from a user's point of view. For example, lists can be ordered chronologically, numerically, by most requested, by most important, or alphabetically.
- Avoid alphabetical order unless the lists are commonplace proper names, such as States, or if the list serves as an index.

### Most Requested Reports

- On-Highway Retail Diesel Prices
- Gasoline and Diesel Fuel Update
- Natural Gas Storage Report
- This Week in Petroleum

The mission of technology development encompasses (in order of priority):

- Extending basic scientific understanding
  1. Developing "enabling" technologies
  2. Enhancing existing technologies
  3. Pursuing "grand challenges"

We emitted more CO<sub>2</sub> from petroleum than other energy fuels:

- **Petroleum:** 2.6 billion metric tons (44%)
- **Coal:** 2.1 billion metric tons (36%)
- **Natural gas:** 1.2 billion metric tons (20%)

State Energy Profiles:

- Alabama
- Alaska
- Arizona
- Arkansas

## Web Editorial Guidelines — Chapter 11 — Footnotes and Notes

### Chapter 11: Footnotes and Notes

#### 1. Using footnotes for explanation, comment, and citation

- Use footnotes for explanations or comments about specific information within the body of documents, tables, or graphics.

In 2006, about 7.1 billion metric tons carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e) of greenhouse gasses were emitted by the United States.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Values expressed as carbon dioxide equivalents (CO<sub>2</sub>e) are calculated based on their global warming potential (GWP).

- Use footnotes for sources and citations about specific information within the body of documents, tables, or graphics.
- If the source is an online document, the title of the document should be a hypertext link within the footnote.

EIA projects that renewable-generated electricity will account for 12.6% of total electricity generation in 2006.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Energy Information Administration, [Annual Energy Outlook 2008](#), Table 8, accessed March 11, 2008.

#### 2. Deciding what terms to define and choosing the correct format

- Define any term that you think a new Congressional staffer might not understand. Definitions can be provided three ways:
  - In the text
  - In a footnote
  - Via a link to the EIA glossary
- Use the most appropriate format for definitions.

##### Use an in-text definition:

- When the definition is critical to the audience's understanding
- When the definition is short and succinct

#### Use a footnote:

- When the document is likely to be printed
- When the definition is not in the EIA glossary
- When the definition is too long or complicated to integrate into the text

#### Use a link to EIA glossary:

- When the document is likely to be read online
- When the definition is in the EIA glossary

### 3. Formatting footnotes correctly in text

- Number footnotes consecutively beginning with 1.
  - In short documents that don't have chapters or sections, footnotes should be sequential throughout the document.
  - In longer documents that have chapters or sections, footnotes should be numbered sequentially by chapter or section.
- Footnotes should appear at the bottom of the web page where they are referenced.
- Footnotes should be identified by a superscript, both within text and in the corresponding note at the bottom of the page.

Renewable energy consumption increased 7% between 2005 and 2006, contributing about 7% of the Nation's total energy demand and 9.5% of total U.S. electricity generation in 2006.<sup>1</sup>

#### ***Most Renewable Energy Goes to Producing Electricity***

Electricity producers<sup>2</sup> consumed 63% of total U.S. renewable energy in both 2005 and 2006 for producing electricity.

---

<sup>1</sup> Energy Information Administration, consumption taken from Renewable Energy Consumption and Electricity Preliminary 2006 Statistics.

<sup>2</sup> Electrical utilities, independent power producers, and combined heat and power plants.

- Avoid overly long footnotes.

### 4. Formatting or displaying footnotes with tables, charts, and other graphics

- Footnotes should be embedded into the image file so that they will print out as part of the graphic.

- Footnotes should appear beneath the graphic in a smaller, but readable, font size.
- In data tables, letters are recommended for the footnote symbol to avoid confusion with the numbers in the data table.

#### Summary of Oil Prices 2006-07

	2006	2007
WTI Crude <sup>a</sup> (\$/barrel)	66.02	72.32
Gasoline <sup>b</sup> (\$/gal)	2.58	2.81

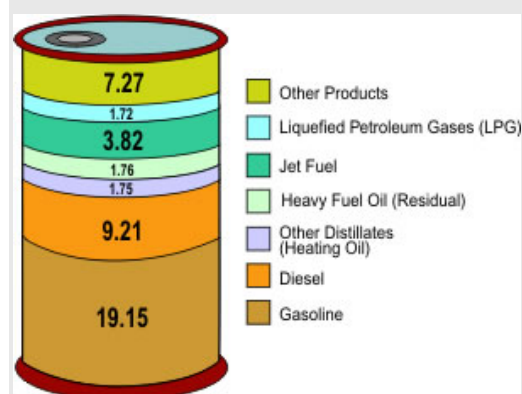
<sup>a</sup> West Texas Intermediate.

<sup>b</sup> Average regular pump price.

#### 5. Using notes

- Use notes for definitions, explanations, or comments that refer to the overall content of the document, table, or graphic, rather than specific data.

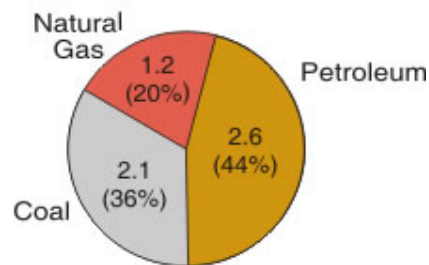
#### Products Made from a Barrel of Crude Oil (Gallons)



Note: Gain from processing is about 5%.

- Use notes for sources and citations that reference the overall content of the document, table, or graphic, rather than specific data.
  - If the source is an online document, the title of the document should be a hypertext link.
  - However, if the object is a graphic, then cite the source in the graphic and/or include a text link to the data.

**Billion Metric Tons CO<sub>2</sub>e**



Source: Energy Information Administration, *Emissions of Greenhouse Gases in the United States 2006* (Nov. 2007).

## 6. Formatting source citations

The following information should be included in source citations that appear as either notes or footnotes.

- Format for online source:
  - Organization or publisher (for example, Energy Information Administration, U.S. Census Bureau)
  - Title of publication (if applicable); title of book or journal appears in italics
  - Reference to specific web page, table, or graphic. This may be a publication title, web page title, or title of chart or other graphic. The title should be hyperlinked to the referenced information. For example, if the data are from a table, the link should be to the table, not the beginning of the document or section.
  - The date of publication of information

Energy Information Administration, *Annual Energy Outlook 2008*, [Table 1A, Total Energy Supply and Disposition Summary](#), accessed March 18, 2008.

- Format for print articles source:
  - Author: last name, first name (if known) or initial
  - Title of article: title is shown in quotation marks
  - Title of publication: title of book or journal appears in italics
  - Volume number (if applicable)

- Date of publication (in parentheses)
- Page number of specific information being cited

S. Saraf, "India Set To Revise Hydroelectric Policy," *Power in Asia*, No. 471 (February 1, 2007), p. 8.

- Format for print book source:
  - Author: last name, first name (if known) or initial
  - Book title: title of book appears in italics
  - Publisher
  - Date of publication (in parentheses)
  - Page number

A. Simon, *Energy Consumption in India*, World Bank (December 2006), p. 6.

## Web Editorial Guidelines — Chapter 12 — Hypertext Links

### Chapter 12: Hypertext Links

#### 1. Using embedded and stand-alone hypertext links

Hypertext links can be embedded or stand-alone.

- Embedded links are contained within text.

The [Primer on Diesel Fuel Prices](#) explains how diesel fuel is made.

- Stand-alone links are menu links or links at the beginning or end of a section of text such as the **Learn More** links used on Energy in Brief articles.

#### Forecasts

- [Annual Energy Outlook](#)
- [Short-Term Energy Outlook](#)
- [International Energy Outlook](#)

**Learn More:** Statistics on U.S. gas stations: [Fuels and Fueling: A Market Correction](#)

#### 2. Writing clear hypertext links

- Never use *Click here* as a link or write text that mentions the link itself. The use of *Click here* forces sighted users to read the surrounding text to understand the context of the word *here*. It also prevents visually impaired users who rely on screen readers from fully understanding where the link is going.

*Do not...*

[Click here](#) to receive updates via EIA's automated email system.

*Do...*

Please follow the link for [more information on how to save energy](#).

- Write descriptive, concise links that tell users what they will get or can accomplish when they click the link.

[Sign up for email updates.](#)

Learn more about [how to save energy](#).

- *Do not* create links that wrap onto a second or third line. Wrapped lines can be hard for users to read.

[Take advantage of lower heating fuel prices for Winter 2006 and guard against future price spikes by investing in energy efficient technologies.](#)

- Emphasize only the distinctive words in a list of links.

*Do...*

Renewable energy information for:

- [Homeowners](#)
- [Small businesses](#)

*Do not...*

- [Renewable energy information for homeowners](#)
- [Renewable energy info for small businesses](#)

- The wording of the link and the title of the destination page should be the same. If the title of the page you are linking to is not clear, consider changing the page's title.

See [Short-Term Energy Outlook March 2008](#) for gasoline projections.

*Corresponding page title:* Short-Term Energy Outlook March 2008

### 3. Using hypertext links to provide additional information

- Use links to provide related content such as glossaries, tables, reports, and graphics.

In 2006, about 60% of the [petroleum](#) consumed in the United States was imported from foreign countries.

[Table 4: U.S. Energy Consumption](#) provides usage data by State.

See [Short-Term Energy Outlook March 2008](#) for gasoline projections.

The chart, [U.S. Oil Imports](#), shows how much oil the United States imports from Mexico.

- When linking to a file other than a web page, indicate the file format after the link.

The [Comparison Calculator](#) (Excel) will help you choose a fuel-efficient heating system.

- Use links to identify EIA reports or analysis in link wording.

Learn More: [Review EIA Weekly Retail On-Highway Diesel Prices](#).